

## Neighborhood Watch Program

This program will provide the following to participating neighborhoods:

- Help neighborhoods become organized and provide Crime Prevention services .
- Inspection of the residence to help deter and prevent crime from occurring.
- Suggestions to increase security and overall safety for residents.

*If interested in the Neighborhood Watch Program, contact The Bluffton Police Department Neighborhood Services Unit.*

**706-4550**

## Important Phone Numbers

### **Emergency 911**

Non-Emergency Bluffton Dispatch	757-3499
Dispatch Main Number	524-2777
Social Services	470-4600
Solicitor's Office	255-5880
Child Abuse Prevention	524-4350
Adult/Child Protective Services	525-7861
Bluffton Self Help	757-8000
United Way of the Low Country	982-3040

### Town of Bluffton Departments **20 Bridge Street**

Town Hall Main Number	706-4500
Police Department Main Number	706-4550
Neighborhood Services Unit	706-4550
Bicycle Registration	706-4550
CARE Program	706-4550
Municipal Court	706-4530
Business License	706-4500



# BLUFFTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

## **Vehicle Break in and Vehicle Theft Prevention**

*The Bluffton Police Department has developed this brochure to provide information to you about vehicle break-in and vehicle theft and ways to prevent it happening to you.*

*By using these tips and increasing community involvement, residents can reduce their chances of becoming a vehicle break in or vehicle theft victim.*

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**Police Chief**  
**Bluffton Police Department**  
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## Vehicle Break In Facts

Theft from parked cars is one of the most common complaints received by police in residential neighborhoods. These types of crimes make up some 36 percent of all larcenies reported to the police. Property crimes in particular tend to be under reported to authorities. In contrast, nearly all thefts of cars are reported to the authorities, because of the significant monetary loss and insurance company reporting requirements.

Thefts from vehicles usually involve small dollar values in terms of the property stolen, but they take up considerable police resources and increase residents' fear of crime. These thefts excepted, crime rates in suburban residential neighborhoods are otherwise low. Cars are generally stolen for one of three purposes: (1) for temporary transportation, such as use in another crime or for "joyriding"; (2) to strip the car of its valuable parts for resale; (3) to re-sell it, often disguised as a legitimate car.

Because suburban residential areas are relatively safe and quiet, residents can become complacent about car security. They may leave their car doors unlocked or the keys in the ignition. Oftentimes, their homes' exterior lighting is wholly inadequate. Overly tall shrubbery and other brush on the premises can provide thieves with cover. An entire neighborhood filled with unlocked cars and poorly lit homes, with plenty of cover, is an inviting scene for a thief.

Thefts of and from cars in suburban residential areas generally occur at night. This is because it is the time most cars are present in these areas, as well as the fact that darkness provides cover for the thieves.

Frequently, thefts from cars will occur in clusters. Numerous larcenies may be reported during the early morning hours when one or more thieves have passed through a neighborhood looking for property to steal. In general, two kinds of property are stolen: personal items and car components.

## Theft from Vehicle and Vehicle Theft Prevention

To become a victim of a crime three elements have to fall into place: opportunity for the thief, a victim, and items to steal. You can very easily remove two of these elements from the crime triangle: the victim and items to steal. More valuables are lost each year due to breaking and entering of a vehicle than to breaking and entering into homes.

At home, make sure your garage door is kept down. If your vehicle is parked in your driveway, make sure that the keys are removed, the windows are up, and the doors are locked.

Do not leave valuables in plain sight in the passenger area of your vehicle.

Secure valuables, purses included, in the trunk area of your vehicle. While doing this keep a constant visual on your surroundings.

Do not leave "spare" change out in the open. To many, this change can be a small fortune.

If your vehicle is equipped with a removable face plate for the stereo, remove and secure it whenever possible.

Don't leave spare keys in your vehicle. An experienced thief knows all the hiding places. Store spare keys in your wallet.

Lock truck-bed toolboxes.

Make several slices through your license plate registration sticker after it has been placed on the plate. If the plate or sticker is stolen, call the DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles) immediately to report the loss and get replacements.

Turn your wheels sharply toward the curb when parking on a street.

Use anti-theft devices that can be attached to the steering wheel or column, or brake pedal. Use one every time you leave your vehicle unattended. They are inexpensive and are recommended by some experts to be the most cost-effective theft deterrent on the market today.

Install fuel or power cut-off switches.

Buy a vehicle with a locking ignition or steering column.

Chain motorcycles and bicycles to stationary objects when unattended.

## Community Involvement

### Be a Good Neighbor

Invite them into your home and establish trust

Agree to watch out for each other's home

Do small tasks for each other to improve territoriality

While on vacation - pick up newspapers, and flyers

Offer to occasionally park your car in their driveway

Return the favor and communicate often.

### Improve Environmental Factors

Prune shrubbery away from windows and entrances.

Trim vegetation to allow visibility into the property.

Keep the yard tidy

Use territorial reinforcement to mark border between private and public property.

Use Natural Access Controls such as flower beds or low shrubbery to guide visitors to your front door.

Keep the community areas clean and maintained.

Ensure that street lights are operational.